

Connections

A publication of the Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education

Volume 8, Issue 4

LITERACY

Autobiographical Storytelling and Literacy impact



Autobiographical Narratives

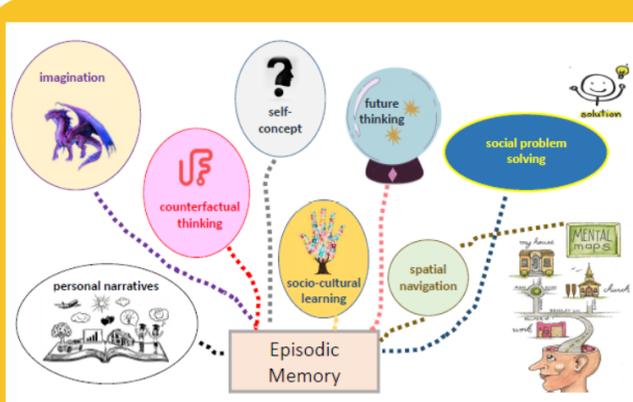
Autobiographical narratives are the events that people remember and tell about themselves. The ability to tell personal stories uses memory to combine individual experiences of self with cultural knowledge. This helps people to understand and accept their own identities and lives. To tell a personal narrative, the individual needs strong autobiographical memory, which includes semantic memory (details) and episodic memory (personal recollections). A child's ability to spontaneously relate an experience, which may be impacted in deaf/hard of hearing children amongst other populations (Brien, et al, 2021), is a predictor of long-term reading and social success. At the core of personal narrative recall and sharing is developing a positive sense of identity and culture. Positive identity and culture is important to reach a child's optimum potential.

Developing Personal Experience Storytelling

Episodic Memory

Episodic memory refers to recalling personal experiences. For example telling about when you lost a family member, the day you won a special award, or the best birthday party are all examples of episodic memory.

It is a form of mental time travel. This form of personal stories is time-ordered, goal-oriented, and engages advanced language skills. Episodic memories are rich in sensory details, thoughts, and feelings. They include imagination, self-concept, culture, and are engaging.



(Hutchens, et. al., 2023)

Semantic Memory

Semantic memory is all about facts. The name of a pet, the time you go to lunch in the cafeteria, etc. They orient the listener/viewer to the person's story and provide the background details needed to engage the listener/viewer in shared storytelling.



Enhancing Literacy

- Tell Stories! Talk about your own personal experiences in an engaging way. Highlight your culture and life experiences.
- When your child tells stories, get to their eye level and listen to/view their narrative.
- Practice telling personal stories with your child. Model putting the story in order, including details, and telling the story in an engaging way.
- Create experience books by taking pictures of an event you and your child experienced and making the pictures into a book. Your child can decide what to write on the pages (or have you write) then you can read it together frequently. Don't just focus on facts, be sure to include emotions, sensory details, thoughts, etc.
- If you are concerned about your child's ability to tell autobiographical stories, ask for a language evaluation that includes a narrative and discourse evaluation.

Find out More

Resources

- <https://tats.ucf.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/32/2018/02/developing-personal-narrative-1.pdf>
- <https://www.readingrockets.org/article/inviting-personal-narratives-classroom>
- <https://www.speechandlanguagekids.com/teach-child-form-narratives/>
- <https://www.scanlonspeech.com/2017/02/16/tell-me-a-story-6-ways-to-improve-your-preschoolers-storytelling/>

References

- Brien, A., Hutchins, T. L., & Westby, C. (2021). Autobiographical memory in autism spectrum disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, hearing loss, and childhood trauma: Implications for social communication intervention. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 52(1), 239-259.
- Fivush, R. (2019). *Family Narratives and the Development of an Autobiographical Self*. Routledge.
- Fivush, R., Haden, C. A., & Reese, E. (2006). Elaborating on elaborations: Role of maternal reminiscing style in cognitive and socioemotional development. *Child development*, 77(6), 1568-1588.
- Hutchins, T.L., Brien, A., R. & Prelock, P. A. (2022). *Supporting Social Learning in Autism*. Brooks Publishing Co.